

# 1 About the California Student Aid Commission

## ***The Commission Vision Statement***

Toward a California that invests in educational opportunity, fosters an active, effective citizenry, and provides a higher quality of social and economic life for its citizens.

## ***The Commission Mission Statement***

Making education beyond high school financially accessible to all Californians.

## 1.1 Commission History

The California Student Aid Commission (Commission) was created by state law in 1955 as the California State Scholarship Commission. The new agency's primary mission was to oversee the California State Scholarship program, the forerunner of today's Cal Grant program. Since that time, the Commission has grown to administer grant, loan assumption and work study programs that total more than 700 million dollars for 2003-04.

### **Loan Guaranty Agency**

The Commission is also the state's designated student loan guaranty agency for the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program. EDFUND was created in 1997 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation to provide loan services under FFEL on behalf of the Commission. The FFEL program is authorized under Title IV of the federal Higher Education Act of 1965.

These loan programs are the Federal Stafford Loan Program, Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) and Consolidation loans.

The Commission now provides loan guarantee services through EDFUND in excess of \$3.5 billion annually, providing educational opportunity to students in all segments of postsecondary education. Over one million students annually benefit from the Commission's important and varied financial aid programs. (C.E.C. 69431, 69432, 69671(a))



## **Policy Leadership Role**

The Commission has a responsibility to provide leadership on financial aid issues and to make public policy recommendations concerning financial aid programs. To meet these responsibilities, the Commission collects information on student financial aid issues, evaluates the effectiveness of its programs, conducts research assessing California's financial aid needs, engages in long range planning as a foundation for program improvement, and disseminates information to parents, students, California educational institutions, the California Legislature and the Governor.

## 1.2 Membership, Meetings, Executive Director, Committees Commission Members

**Governor Appointees-** The California Student Aid Commission consists of 15 members. The Governor, with a two-thirds consent of the Senate, appoints eleven Commission members. By law, these appointments must include:

- ▶ three representatives from the general public;
- ▶ one representative from a California secondary school;
- ▶ two representatives, each of whom must be a student enrolled in a California postsecondary educational institution (in different segments at the time of appointment);
- ▶ one representative from the University of California;

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- ▶ one representative from the California State University;
- ▶ one representative from the California Community Colleges;
- ▶ one representative from a California independent college or university; and
- ▶ one representative from a public, proprietary or nonprofit California postsecondary school

**Assembly and Senate Appointees-** The Speaker of the Assembly appoints two Commission members and the Senate Rules Committee appoints two members. These members represent the general public. (C.E.C. 69510 (a-h))

Most Commission members are appointed to four-year terms, unless they are filling a vacant, unexpired term. In that case, they complete the remainder of the unexpired term. Student members serve two-year terms. (C.E.C. 69511 (a))

**ScholarShare Investment Board-** One member of the Commission is appointed by the Governor to serve on the investment board of the Golden State ScholarShare Trust. ScholarShare is California's federal and state tax-free 529 college savings program administered by the State Treasurer's Office.

## Commission Meetings, Correspondence

Commission meetings are usually held six times annually and the meetings are open to the public. (C.E.C. 69513, 69513.1 and 69513.5)



Letters and informational materials addressed to Commission members may be sent to the address in Chapter 12.

## Executive Director

The Executive Director is the Commission's chief executive officer and is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Commission. The Commission may delegate authority to the Executive Director to sign contracts and carry out the policies and regulatory directions of the Commission and

conduct the day-to-day business of the Commission. The Executive Director and Commission staff welcome public participation in all student financial aid matters.



## Grant Advisory Committee

The Grant Advisory Committee advises the Commission on program funding and policy issues. All major proposed or planned program changes are brought to this committee for review and advice. In addition, the committee typically reviews and comments on reports to the Legislature. Technical and operational issues are directed to standing or ad hoc committees that work with Commission staff.

The Committee consists of 20 members:

- ▶ ten school representatives: two from each segment\*;
- ▶ five students: one from each segment;
- ▶ a California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA) representative;
- ▶ a representative of the California Postsecondary Education Commission; and
- ▶ three K-12 school representatives, one of whom must be a high school counselor.

\*These segments include the University of California, the California State University, the California Community Colleges, private nonprofit postsecondary education institutions, and private for-profit postsecondary education institutions.

The Commission makes Committee appointments based on recommendations and nominations received from each group listed. Committee members meet up to six times a year. As with Commission meetings, Grant Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public. Agenda items are typically presented as action items at subsequent meetings. The Grant Advisory Committee was created by procedures of the Commission and is not mandated by state law.



Letters and informational materials addressed to any advisory committee members may be sent to the address shown in Chapter 12.



## Loan Advisory Council

Reviews the activities and policies of the Federal Family Education Loan Program and advises the Commission of its findings and recommendations.

**Loan Advisory Council Representation-** The Council consists of 17 members, all appointed by the Commission. They are:

- ▶ Four representatives from the lending community participating in the Federal Family Education Loan Programs
- ▶ Five school representatives, one from each of the five postsecondary segments
- ▶ Five student representatives, one from each of the segments listed above
- ▶ One representative from CASFAA
- ▶ One representative from a secondary market participating in the Federal Family Education Loan Programs
- ▶ One representative from the California Lenders for Education (CLFE)

In addition to the members appointed to the Loan Advisory Council by the Commission, the United States Education Department may appoint one nonvoting representative who serves as liaison between the Department and the Council.



## Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee

Reviews the activities and policies of the Cal-SOAP Program and recommends to the Commission policies and programs to increase the participation rates and success of students who enter a postsecondary institution, and who, because of their economic and or academic circumstances, are unlikely to pursue college opportunities without academic, financial, and advisement assistance.

## Cal-SOAP Advisory Committee

**Representation-** The Committee consists of members who represent:

- ▶ The Student Aid Commission
- ▶ Independent California Colleges and Universities
- ▶ California Department of Education
- ▶ California Postsecondary Education Commission
- ▶ California Community Colleges
- ▶ California Department of Education
- ▶ California Postsecondary Education Commission Student
- ▶ Senate Rules Committee
- ▶ California State University
- ▶ California Postsecondary Education Commission Student
- ▶ Assembly Speaker
- ▶ University of California
- ▶ Commission Member